

Dianne McKenna

February 11, 2014

Association of Bay Area Governments
Growing Smarter Together Selection Committee
101 Eighth Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Selection Committee Members:

As a former President of ABAG, Santa Clara County Supervisor, and Sunnyvale Mayor I know the importance of ABAG'S Smart Growth efforts. Currently, I serve as chairperson of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's Community Advisory Committee, and I highly recommend the District for ABAG's *Growing Smarter Together - Preserving and Protecting the Environment Award*.

Over the last 41 years, the District has preserved over 62,000 acres of open space in our rapidly growing cities. The District offers free outdoor recreational opportunities, protects habitat for rare and endangered species and provides our residents with a better quality of life. Along with their scenic beauty, our open space lands also provide clean air and water, making this a healthier place to live and work.

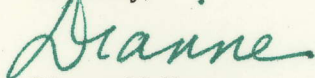
For the past year, the District has taken a unique and engaging approach in planning for the next 40 years of open space protection. The District's vision plan process included a complete scientific analysis of its lands with GIS mapping of everything from rare plants, to groves of redwood trees, to creeks and streams in need of restoration, to the most ecological and user-friendly locations for trails and trail connections.

The District formed a Community Advisory Committee of residents, educators, open space users, environmental experts, and community leaders to provide guidance and review both the scientific analysis and public input. The public input component of the Vision Plan process is most impressive. The community became part of the process when the District talked to over 2,000 residents in person, over the phone, through workshops, and through an innovative online interactive website.

The final vision plan project list was a combination of the best scientific analysis and community engagement in defining key project areas throughout the District's three county areas. It was a shining example of the community engaged in the planning process and truly defining a regional comprehensive outlook for the future of open space.

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District is most deserving of this prestigious award.

Sincerely,



Dianne McKenna
ABAG President 1985-1986